

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 PPT-01 CA-01 /086 W  
-----106793 201554Z /50

R 201519Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6307  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 09234

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, MILI, BQG, GE  
SUBJECT: RUMOR OF GDR CHANGE IN PASSPORT/AUSWEIS  
PROCEDURES FOR DIPLOMATS STATIONED IN THE GDR

REF: A) USBERLIN 3174, B) BERLIN 8349

1. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THE RUMOR -- COMING FROM WEST  
BERLIN -- THAT GDR PLANS TO CLOSE FRIEDRICHSTRASSE CHECK-  
POINT BETWEEN 2400 HOURS AND 0600 HOURS DAILY BEGINNING  
JAN. 1, 1978 (REF A). WE HAVE, HOWEVER, HEARD NOTHING  
FROM LOCAL DIPLOMATIC OR OTHER SOURCES HERE THAT WOULD  
TEND TO CONFIRM THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH A POSSIBILITY.  
IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT EFFECT, IF ANY, THIS WOULD HAVE ON  
ALLIED FORCES OR ON DIPLOMATS STATIONED IN EAST BERLIN.  
THE CHECKPOINT MIGHT BE CLOSED FOR TOURIST TRAFFIC BUT  
REMAIN OPEN FOR FLAG PASS AND AUSWEIS HOLDERS.

2. WE HAVE HEARD ANOTHER RUMOR, AND IT IS ONLY THAT,  
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CONCERNING A POSSIBLE CHANGE IN THE USE OF DIPLOMATIC  
AUSWEISE FOR DIPLOMATS STATIONED HERE AND WHO ARE  
TRANSITING THE VARIOUS CHECKPOINTS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST  
BERLIN. THE RUMOR COMES INITIALLY FROM ONE EGYPTIAN  
SOURCE, AND HAS NOT, REPEAT NOT, BEEN HEARD FROM ANY  
OTHER SOURCE HERE. (THE BRITISH EMBASSY HAS REPORTED  
IT TO LONDON AND, WE UNDERSTAND, ALSO TO THEIR EMBASSY

IN BONN.) THE ESSENCE OF THE RUMOR IS THAT THE GDR IS EXPECTED TO "TAKE ACTION" ON BERLIN SOME TIME IN THE NEW YEAR; THE "ACTION" WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF THE GDR ELIMINATING THE USE OF DIPLOMATIC AUSWEISE FOR TRANSITING THE VARIOUS CHECKPOINTS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF THE CITY AND REQUIRING DIPLOMATS TO USE THEIR DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS (WITH VALID GDR VISAS) INSTEAD. THE PURPOSE OF THE MOVE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE TO REINFORCE THE GDR CONTENTION THAT THE CHECKPOINTS ARE INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING POINTS.

3. THE GDR FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS IN FACT SENT A CIRCULAR NOTE TO ALL EMBASSIES, INDICATING THAT IT PLANS TO ISSUE NEW AUSWEISE AND ASKING THAT ALL MISSIONS SUBMIT BY JANUARY 20 APPROPRIATE INFORMATION AND PICTURES FOR PERSONNEL ENTITLED TO NEW AUSWEISE. PASSPORTS AND OLD AUSWEISE ARE TO BE SUBMITTED (TO THE MFA) IN CONNECTION WITH THE ISSUANCE OF THE NEW AUSWEISE. IN THE VIEW OF SOME THE GDR WILL REFRAIN FROM ISSUING THE NEW AUSWEISE AND, HAVING COLLECTED THE OLD ONES, WOULD THEN INFORM ALL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS THAT HENCEFORTH EMBASSY PERSONNEL WOULD BE REQUIRED TO SHOW PASSPORTS AND VALID VISAS WHEN CROSSING BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN. ON THE FACE OF IT, THE MOVE WOULD BE A LOGICAL ONE FROM THE GDR STANDPOINT, AND PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT, EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD CAUSE DIPLOMATS HERE SOME INCON-

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VENIENCE IN THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO CARRY THEIR PASSPORTS RATHER THAN AUSWEISE WITH THEM.

4. FOR THE THREE WESTERN ALLIES, SUCH A MOVE WOULD PRESUMABLY RESULT IN ANOTHER TEST AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE OF THE DIPLOMATIC "FLASH" PROCEDURE, SINCE WE WOULD NOT WISH TO SHOW VALID GDR VISAS IN SUPPORT OF THE POSITION THAT THE CROSSING POINTS ARE SECTOR DIVIDING LINES AND THAT DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS ARE ADEQUATE IDENTIFICATION FOR SUCH PURPOSES. (THE PROBLEM WOULD BE EVEN MORE SEVERE FOR THE BRITISH SINCE THEY DO NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS.) SUCH A GDR MOVE WOULD ALSO ELIMINATE USE OF THE OTHER SECTOR CROSSING POINTS, SINCE THE DIPLOMATIC FLASH PROCEDURE CAN ONLY BE USED AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE, AND WE PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT (1) RAISE WITH THE SOVIETS THE QUESTION OF TRANSIT AT CROSSING POINTS OTHER THAN CHECKPOINT CHARLIE OR (2) RAISE WITH THE EAST GERMANS THE GENERAL QUESTION OF TRAVEL WITHIN BERLIN, REGARDLESS OF WHICH CHECKPOINT MIGHT BE INVOLVED.

5. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THE GDR HAS PUT UP CUSTOMS (ZOLL -

DOUANE) SIGNS AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE AND AT THE BORN-  
HOLMERSTRASSE CROSSING POINT AND PERHAPS AT OTHERS,  
ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT YET HAD A CHANCE TO CHECK. THESE  
SIGNS ALSO HAVE THE EFFECT OF GIVING THE SECTOR DIVIDING  
LINES ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INTERNATIONAL  
BORDER, AND MAY INDICATE THAT THE GDR WILL PUSH FOR  
CLOSER CUSTOMS CHECKS FOR DIPLOMATS, AS SEEMED TO BE  
THEIR PURPOSE IN RAISING THIS MATTER IN AN APPARENTLY  
SPORADIC WAY WITH SEVERAL MISSIONS HERE (REF B). IN  
THIS CONNECTION WE NOTE THAT THE WEST BERLIN CUSTOMS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BERLIN 09234

AUTHORITIES REGULARLY EXERCISE CUSTOMS CONTROL AT THE  
SECTOR CHECKPOINTS. THIS HAS INVOLVED SELECTIVE SEARCHES  
OF VEHICLES, INCLUDING ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SEARCHES  
OF UK DIPLOMATIC-PLATED VEHICLES. THIS CUSTOMS CONTROL  
BY WESTERN AUTHORITIES HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN  
RECENT WEEKS.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED, AT THIS STAGE, TO THINK  
THAT THE EAST GERMANS WILL GO AHEAD, AS THEY HAVE  
STATED, WITH THE ISSUANCE OF NEW AUSWEISE RATHER THAN  
INSIST ON THE USE OF PASSPORTS AND VISAS. IF IT WERE  
THEIR INTENTION TO RESORT TO THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF  
PASSPORTS AND VISAS AT THE CHECKPOINTS, WE THINK IT IS  
MORE LIKELY THEY WOULD SIMPLY ISSUE A CIRCULAR NOTE TO  
THAT EFFECT, GIVING ONLY MINIMAL NOTICE FOR ITS IMPLE-

MENTATION. ALL AUSWEISE EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31 IN ANY  
CASE AND THE GDR COULD EASILY REFUSE TO ISSUE NEW ONES  
WITHOUT GOING THROUGH A DEVIOUS SUBTERFUGE. BOLEN

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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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